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Qu'est ce que le progrès? Examen des idées de M. Herbert Spencer.

Par N. MIKHAILOWSKY. Traduction du Russe, Revue par PAUL LOUIS. Paris: Felix Alcan, 1897. 12mo, pp. 200.

THIS book appeared in its original form in 1869 and is, therefore, an examination of the ideas of Mr. Spencer only as they had been published up to that time. The brunt of the author's criticism falls upon the essay, *Progress: Its Law and Cause*. The laws of the instability of the homogeneous, and the multiplicity of effects laid down in that essay, require certain modifications before they can be accepted. The homogeneous is indeed unstable, but why? It is because, says our author, the homogeneity is submitted to the action of different forces, it is due to the heterogeneity of the environment. A homogeneous universe then would not be unstable. There would be nothing to disturb its equilibrium. It is only heterogeneity that can produce the transformation of the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, that is, evolution.

This seems plausible enough, but the author seems to forget that Spencer attributes to matter the endowment of indestructible motions, and that motion *produces* the phenomenon of aggregation. All that is necessary, therefore, to change a perfectly homogeneous mass of matter to a heterogeneous one is the preponderance of one class of motions over another. It may be said, too, that the resort of the critic to a purely imaginary state to find an exception to the law is practically an admission that it holds good in the universe as we know it, and that is all that Spencer would claim. The author concludes this part of his criticism with the statement that the formula of progress might be more clearly expressed in the form, the passage of the less heterogeneous to the more heterogeneous, but for brevity, and with the necessary mental reservations he adopts the Spencerian formula.

This, one is inclined to say, is rather barren criticism. But the book contains much that is better. The weak point in Spencer's system, that is the omission of the anthro-po-teleological factor in social progress, or perhaps we should say his omission of considerations of human happiness from his definition of progress is hit upon by this comparatively early writer and exposed with great clearness. One finds some sharp criticism, too, of the organic conception of society. The fundamental difference between society and an organism, says the writer, is that in an organism it is the whole which suffers and enjoys, while in

society it is the parts (p. 76). To identify society and an organism is to neglect both the suffering and the enjoyment of man.

As to the question, What is Progress? the author answers it in the following way: Progress consists in the gradual approximation of the integrality of individuals, of the most complete and varied division of labor between the organs, and in fact in the gradual approximation of the smallest division of labor amongst men. Everything that is contrary to this development, he declares, is immoral, unjust, unreasonable, and harmful; while everything that diminishes the heterogeneity of society, and thereby increases the heterogeneity of its members is moral, just, reasonable, and useful (p. 200).

One would think that a book worth writing and translating would be provided with an index, or at least a table of contents. But both these conveniences are wanting. Not even headings to the various chapters are supplied. The book is, therefore, uninviting to the reader and as useless to the average student as it well could be. One might think that it was published with the idea that nobody would ever read it.

I. W. HOWERTH.

Outlines of Elementary Economics. By HERBERT J. DAVENPORT.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897. 12mo. xiv
+ 280.

AS AN economist Mr. Davenport is best judged by his "Outlines of Economic Theory," which was published in 1896 and was reviewed in this JOURNAL, for September 1897. His smaller work just issued will therefore be considered here only on its pedagogical side.

The first noticeable feature of the book is its small size—about one-half that of most other text-books in political economy. This, with the substantial binding, is no small advantage in a book for school use.

The feature next noticed is the liberal supply of pedagogical questions. Each subject is introduced in a series of questions placed at the head of the chapter or portion of a chapter. In the preface the author advises that these "questions be attempted, or a discussion of them had in the class room, before the text is read by the student or appointed for him to study." This is admirable. A brief preliminary quiz which will bring out the vital problem in the advance lesson is frequently employed by teachers; when the students are immature, a